



# U.S. DEPARTMENT of STATE

## Libya\*

### Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - [2004](#)

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The Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya is an authoritarian regime ruled by Colonel Mu'ammar Al-Qadhafi since 1969, when he led a military coup that overthrew King Idris I. Borrowing from Islamic and pan-Arab ideas, Qadhafi created a political system that rejects Western democracy and political parties and claims to have established a "third way" superior to capitalism and communism. The country's governing principles are derived predominantly from Qadhafi's "Green Book" Ideology. In theory, the citizenry rules the country through a series of popular congresses, as laid out in the 1969 Constitutional Proclamation and the 1977 Declaration on the Establishment of the Authority of the People; however, in practice, Qadhafi and his inner circle monopolize political power. According to the U.N. Development Program, the legislative branch is composed of the unicameral General People's Congress (GPC) with 760 members elected indirectly for a 3-year term. The most recent election or "renewal" of the GPC was in March. Revolutionary Committees are nominally extra-governmental organizations that regulate many aspects of citizens' lives; however, in practice, the Government controls the committees. The judiciary is not independent of the Government. Government corruption was a problem.

The country maintains an extensive security apparatus that includes police and military units, multiple intelligence services, local Revolutionary Committees, People's Committees, and "Purification" Committees. The result is a multi-layered, pervasive surveillance system that monitors and controls the activities of individuals. The civilian authorities maintain effective control of the security forces. Security forces have the authority to impose sentences without trial, and the various security forces committed numerous, serious human rights abuses.

The country has a centrally directed economy, with a growing private sector. The population is approximately 5.7 million. The Government exercised complete control over the country's oil resources, which accounted for approximately 95 percent of export earnings and an estimated 23 percent of the gross domestic product. The estimated growth rate was 2.4 percent. The Government's mismanagement of the economy has led to a decline in the standard of living for most of its citizens in recent years.

On March 6, in an effort to address economic shortcomings, the GPC passed numerous laws aimed at liberalizing the economy. Foreign governments lifted travel, commercial, and economic sanctions against the country during the year. However, the country remained subject to sanctions related to past sponsorship of terrorism.

The Government's human rights record remained poor, and the Government continued to commit numerous, serious abuses. Citizens did not have the right to change their government. Prison conditions were poor. Security forces arbitrarily arrested and detained persons, and prisoners were held incommunicado. Many political detainees were held for years without charge or trial. The Government controlled the judiciary, and citizens did not have the right to a fair public trial. Official impunity was a problem. The Government used summary judicial proceedings in many cases. The Government infringed on citizens' privacy rights; restricted freedom of speech, press, assembly, association, and religion; imposed limits on freedom of movement; continued to ban political parties; and continued to prohibit the establishment of independent human rights organizations. Domestic violence against women was a problem. Traditional attitudes and practices continued to discriminate against women. There were reports of trafficking in persons. The Government continued to repress banned Islamic groups and discriminated against ethnic and tribal minorities. The Government restricted labor rights, denied basic worker rights, and discriminated against foreign workers.

## RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

### Section 1 Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom From:

#### a. Arbitrary or Unlawful Deprivation of Life

According to available information, there were no reports of the arbitrary or unlawful deprivation of life committed by the Government or its agents; however, poor prison conditions have contributed to an unknown number of deaths in custody (see Section 1.c.).

## b. Disappearance

There were no reports of politically motivated disappearances.

During the year, tensions again flared between the Government and the Government of Lebanon over accusations of the country's responsibility for the 1978 disappearance of Lebanese Shi'a leader Imam Musa Al-Sadr and two of his companions. In October, Italian authorities handed over to the Lebanese Government passports allegedly belonging to Sadr and one of his companions. The media subsequently reported that the Lebanese Government planned to question Qadhafi in Lebanon about the case. There were no further developments by year's end.

## c. Torture and Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

The law does not prohibit such practices, and there were reports that government officials employed them. Security personnel reportedly routinely tortured prisoners during interrogations or as punishment. Government agents reportedly detained and tortured foreign workers, particularly those from sub-Saharan Africa. Reports of torture were difficult to corroborate because many prisoners were held incommunicado.

The reported methods of torture included: chaining prisoners to a wall for hours; clubbing; applying electric shock; applying corkscrews to the back; pouring lemon juice in open wounds; breaking fingers and allowing the joints to heal without medical care; suffocating with plastic bags; deprivation of food and water; hanging by the wrists; suspension from a pole inserted between the knees and elbows; cigarettes burns; threats of being attacked by dogs; and beating on the soles of the feet.

According to Amnesty International (AI), the foreign defendants, who were charged with deliberately infecting children in a hospital in Benghazi, reported that they had been tortured through electric shock and beatings to extract their confessions. Two of the police officers accused of inflicting the torture denied the allegations. On May 6, the Benghazi court determined it did not have jurisdiction to try the officers accused of torture in the health workers' case (see Section 1.e.).

In April, Qadhafi called for the abolition of torture and urged the GPC to ratify anti-torture agreements; however, no actions were taken during the year.

According to foreign diplomats, prison conditions generally were poor. In February, the Government permitted AI to visit the country following a 15-year absence. The AI delegation visited some prisons, and spoke with some inmates they considered to be "prisoners of conscience." The authorities prevented the group from seeing selected prisoners despite repeated requests. The Government did not permit other human rights monitors to visit the prisons.

During its visit, AI raised concerns with the Government about the health of 86 men in Abu Salim prison who undertook a 7-day hunger strike, in October 2003, to protest lengthy delays in their appeal process and to call for the abolition of the People's Court. The Abu Salim detainees were believed to be members of the Libyan Islamic Group, also known as the Muslim Brotherhood. At least eight of the hunger strikers reportedly were taken to a hospital, but there were no details about any medical attention afforded to the others.

Security forces reportedly subjected political detainees to cruel, inhumane, or degrading conditions, and denied adequate medical care, which led to several deaths in custody.

In at least three cases known to AI, the Government issued death certificates that stated the prisoners had died of natural causes, without further explanation or any evidence. In each case reported to AI, the authorities refused to return the detainee's body to the family.

Male and female prisoners were held separately, and juveniles were separated from adults. Pretrial detainees and convicts were held together in the same facilities. More than half the prisoners in the country were reportedly pretrial detainees. Prison officials frequently held pretrial detainees for long periods of time (see Section 1.d.).

## d. Arbitrary Arrest or Detention

The law prohibits arbitrary arrest and detention; however, the Government did not observe these prohibitions. Security forces arbitrarily arrested and detained citizens. The Government held many political detainees incommunicado for unlimited periods in unofficial detention centers controlled by members of the Revolutionary Committees.

Detainees can be held after arrest for up to 48 hours at a police station. They must then be brought before a prosecutor, who can hold them for 6 days under investigation. Detainees must then be brought before a judicial authority at regular intervals of 30 days to renew their detention order.

The Government reportedly held hundreds of political detainees, many associated with banned Islamic groups, in prisons throughout the country, but mainly in the Abu Salim prison in Tripoli. Some human rights organizations estimated the number of

political detainees to be as high as 2,000. Many detainees reportedly have been held for years without charge. Hundreds of other detainees may have been held for periods too brief (3 to 4 months) to permit confirmation by outside observers.

By law, bail must be set for pretrial detainees, detainees must have access to counsel, and public defenders represent those who cannot afford a private attorney. Detainees reportedly did not receive information on their rights to legal representation during interrogation.

On March 12, the Government released Fathi Al-Jahmi in response to international pressure. Al-Jahmi originally had been sentenced to 5-years imprisonment in 2002 after calling for democratic reforms. On March 26, the Government detained Al-Jahmi again, along with his wife, Fawzia Abdullah Gogha, and son, Mohammad. Al-Jahmi had given several international media interviews, in which he again called for reform. The Government did not file new charges against Al-Jahmi, asserting that his detention was for his own protection. Fawzia Abdullah Gogha and Mohammad were released later. Mohammad reported that Al-Jahmi was in poor health, and he did not receive adequate medical treatment. According to Al, the Government denied Al-Jahmi access to legal counsel, and his whereabouts remained unknown at year's end.

On April 7, the appeals resumed for 152 Muslim Brotherhood activists. The appeals originally had started in 2002 after sentences were issued ranging from the death penalty to life imprisonment and 10-years imprisonment (see Section 1.e.).

The London-based newspaper, Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, reported that the Government arrested human rights activist, Ashur Al-Warfalli, on December 8 for issuing a statement against the Government's human rights policy. Al-Warfalli's statement called for the release of political detainees, amnesty for exiles and dissidents, and the freedom of expression for all citizens. His whereabouts remained unknown at year's end.

On March 2, the Government pardoned 1,059 prisoners in celebration of the anniversary of the Declaration of the People's Authority.

#### e. Denial of Fair Public Trial

The law provides for an independent judiciary; however, the judiciary was not independent. Security forces had the authority to pass sentences without trial, particularly in cases involving political opposition. The Government used summary judicial proceedings to suppress domestic dissent. Qadhafi was empowered to interfere in the administration of justice by altering court judgements or replacing judges. The judiciary failed to incorporate international standards for fair trials and standards for detention and imprisonment.

The judicial system is composed of a four-tiered hierarchy. The Summary Courts hear cases involving misdemeanors of lesser value. The decisions of this court may be appealed to the Courts of First Instance. These courts are composed of chambers of three judges and have the authority to adjudicate in all civil, criminal, and commercial cases. In addition, the jurors apply the Shari'a principles in cases involving personal status. Cases from the Courts of First Instance may be appealed to the Courts of Appeal, which are composed of panels of three judges. The Shari'a Court of Appeals hears cases from the lower Shari'a court.

The final court of appeal is the Supreme Court, composed of five separate chambers, one each for civil and commercial, criminal, administrative, constitutional, and Shari'a. The Supreme Court sits in chambers of five judges and rules by majority decision. The GPC elects the presiding president and other members of the Supreme Court.

Special revolutionary or national security courts, such as the People's Court, try political offenses. Such trials often are held in secret or even in the absence of the accused. The People's Court system also focuses on administrative, civil, and criminal offences. The court contains its own prosecution service, in addition to courts of first instance (composed of a three-judge panel) and courts of appeal (composed of a five-judge panel). In April, Qadhafi called for the elimination of the People's Court; however, the court was still in existence at year's end.

The law provides for the presumption of innocence. Defendants must be informed of the charges brought against them, and they have the right to legal counsel; however, defense lawyers automatically are appointed, even if the defendant declines to have one. In some cases involving large numbers of defendants, it is reportedly common for the accused not to know who his or her lawyer is. There is usually very little contact, if any, between the lawyer and client.

On December 1, the People's Court confirmed the sentences of 86 activists, known as the Muslim Brotherhood. In 2002, 2 defendants received death sentences, 73 received life imprisonment, and 11 received 10-years' imprisonment for forming an illegal political organization.

On May 6, a court sentenced to death 6 foreign health workers accused of deliberately infecting 426 children with HIV-tainted blood in 1999. The sentences reportedly were based on confessions that the accused made under torture (see Section 1.c.). International observers had serious concerns about the lack of investigation into allegations of torture and delays in bringing the case to a conclusion. Appeals still were pending at year's end.

#### f. Arbitrary Interference with Privacy, Family, Home, or Correspondence

The law prohibits such actions; however, the Government did not respect these prohibitions. The security agencies often disregarded the legal requirement to obtain warrants before entering a private home. They also routinely monitored telephone calls.

The security agencies and the Revolutionary Committees oversaw an extensive network of informants. Foreign observers estimated 10 to 20 percent of the population was engaged in surveillance for the Government. The Government threatened to seize and destroy property belonging to "enemies of the people" or those who "cooperate" with foreign powers. In the past, citizens reported that the Government warned members of the extended family of government opponents that they too risked the severe punishment. Exiles reported that family members of suspected government opponents were harassed and threatened with detention.

The law provides for the collective punishment of families or communities that aid, abet, or do not inform the Government of criminals and oppositionists. Punishments range from the denial of access to utilities (water, electricity, telephone), fuels, food supplies, official documents, participation in local assemblies, and the termination of new economic projects and state subsidies. Collective punishment also can be inflicted on the relatives of individuals, particularly oppositionists, who are convicted of having committed certain crimes. In such cases, the punishment could be expulsion of the family from their homes and demolition of the homes. There were no reports of collective punishment being implemented during the year.

The Purge Law provides for the confiscation of private assets above a nominal amount, describing wealth in excess of such undetermined amounts as "the fruits of exploitation or corruption." During the year, there were no reports of confiscation.

## Section 2 Respect for Civil Liberties, Including:

### a. Freedom of Speech and Press

The law provides for freedom of speech "within the limits of public interest and principles of the Revolution"; however, the Government severely limited the freedoms of speech and of the press, particularly any criticism of Qadhafi or government policy. The Government tolerated some difference of opinion in People's Committee meetings and at the GPC.

On March 26, the Government re-detained Fathi Al-Jahmi after Al-Jahmi spoke out against the regime to the foreign media (see Section 1.d.).

On December 8, the Government arrested Ashur Al-Warfalli for releasing a statement in which he called for a number of human rights reforms.

The Government prohibited all political activities not officially approved, enacted laws so vague that many forms of speech or expression may be interpreted as illegal, and operated an extensive system of informants that created an atmosphere of self-censorship at all levels of society (see Section 1.f.).

The Government owned and controlled the print and broadcast media. There were no privately owned radio or television stations. Local Revolutionary Committees published several small newspapers. The official news agency, JANA, was the designated conduit for official views. The Government did not permit the publication of opinions contrary to its policy. Some foreign publications were available; however, the Government routinely censored them and, at times, prohibited their distribution. The publications law governs the operation of the press, reserving all rights for publishing to two public entities: The General Corporation of Press, Professional Unions, and Syndicates, and the Ad-dar Al-Jamahiriya.

Satellite television was widely available, although foreign programming was censored at times. Internet access was limited due to the existence of a single service provider; however, the number of Internet users increased during the year.

The Government severely restricted academic freedom. Professors and teachers who discussed politically sensitive topics faced the risk of government reprisal.

### b. Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association

The law does not provide for the freedom of assembly or association, and the Government severely restricted these rights in practice. Public assembly was permitted only with the Government's approval and in support of the Government's positions.

On April 7, government security forces disrupted a demonstration by members of the Muslim Brotherhood. They were protesting the prolonged detention and adjournment of appeals of 152 members (see Section 1.e.).

The Government restricted the right of association; it granted this right only to institutions affiliated with the Government. The formation of groups based on a political ideology was banned (see Section 3). Political activity deemed treasonous by the Government is punishable by death. An offense may include any activity that is "opposed to the principles of the Revolution." On December 1, an appeals court upheld the sentences of 86 prisoners convicted in 1998 for establishing a political organization

(see Section 1.e.).

c. Freedom of Religion

The law provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respected this right with some restrictions. The Government was tolerant of other faiths, with the exception of militant forms of Islam, which it viewed as a threat to the regime. Because the wearing of a beard was associated with fundamentalist Islam, some Muslims reportedly shaved their beards to avoid being harassed by security forces. The Government also controlled mosques and Islamic institutions and heavily censored clerics.

The World Islamic Call Society (WICS) was the outlet for the state-approved form of Islam. The Government prohibited Islamic groups whose views were contrary to the authorized teachings. The WICS was responsible for relations with other religions, including Christian churches in the country.

Christian churches operated openly and were tolerated by the authorities; however, the Government imposed a limit of one church per denomination per city. There were no official places of worship for the practitioners of minority religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, and the Baha'i Faith.

A noncitizen female that marries a Muslim citizen is not required to convert to Islam; however, a noncitizen male must convert to marry a Muslim woman.

For a more detailed discussion, see the [2004 International Religious Freedom Report](#).

d. Freedom of Movement Within the Country, Foreign Travel, Emigration, Repatriation, and Exile

The law does not provide these rights, but the Government generally did not restrict the freedom of movement within the country.

The Government requires citizens to obtain exit permits for travel abroad, and limits their access to hard currency. Authorities routinely seized the passports of foreigners married to citizens upon their entry into the country. A female citizen must have her husband's permission and a male escort to travel abroad (see Section 5, Women).

The law does not provide for or prohibit forced exile, and the Government did not impose forced exile as a form of punishment. The Government continued to encourage the return of citizen dissidents abroad, promising to ensure their safety. According to AI, some citizens were subjected to arbitrary arrest and detention upon their repatriation. Students studying abroad reportedly have been interrogated upon their return.

The law prohibits the extradition of political refugees; however, in practice, the Government did not provide protection against refoulement, the return of persons to a country where they feared persecution. There was no established system to deal with refugees and asylum seekers, or national legislation to determine refugee and asylum status. According to the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Government considers refugees and asylum seekers as "foreigners residing in country without any specific distinction." The country is not a party to the 1951 U.N. Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol; however, it is a party to the Organization of African Unity's Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa. The Government has not signed a formal cooperation agreement with the UNHCR, which reported that there were approximately 12,000 urban refugees registered with its Tripoli office and 43,000 total refugees in country.

The Government expelled noncitizens arbitrarily. On July 21, the Government deported more than 110 people to Eritrea who reportedly had fled from military service or evaded conscription. AI reported that they then were held incommunicado in military camps. In August, the authorities deported 76 Eritrean asylum seekers who later reported being mistreated and denied medical attention while in custody. The Government continued to deport family members of suspected al-Qa'ida members during the year. In February, the Government extradited a human trafficker to Italy upon the Italian Government's request (see Section 5, Trafficking).

Section 3 Respect for Political Rights: The Right of Citizens to Change Their Government

The law makes no provisions for elections, and citizens do not have the right to change their government. The country's governing principles stem from Qadhafi's "Green Book," which combines Islamic ideals with elements of socialism and pan-Arabism. The "Green Book" provides that direct popular rule is the basis of the political system and that citizens play a role in popular congresses; however, Qadhafi, his close associates, and committees acting in his name controlled major government decisions. Corruption and favoritism, based on tribal origin, were major problems that adversely affected government efficiency.

The Government prohibits the creation of and subsequent membership in political parties. The only party structure that exists is the official Arab Socialist Union, created in 1971 to encourage political involvement among citizens. Revolutionary Committees, composed primarily of youths, guarded against political dissent and ensured that citizens followed sanctioned ideology within

society. These committees approved all candidates in elections for the GPC.

The people exercise their authority through people's congresses, people's committees, trade unions, vocational syndicates, and the GPC, which is the Parliament. The General People's Committee manages the daily affairs of the Government. Elections occur every 3 years, when the People's Congresses, the local bodies comprised of all citizens, choose their leadership committees. The election process continues up the hierarchy of people's congresses, until the GPC chooses the General People's Committee. The last election of people's congresses took place early in the year.

There was one woman in the 760-seat GPC. One woman occupied a seat in the GPC. There were no women in the cabinet. There was no reliable information on the representation of minorities in the Government.

#### Section 4 Governmental Attitude Regarding International and Nongovernmental Investigation of Alleged Violations of Human Rights

There were numerous charitable associations approved by the Government, and operating in the country; however, the Government prohibited the establishment of independent human rights organizations. Individuals wishing to carry out human rights work were forced to operate abroad due to restrictive laws that imposed imprisonment for forming or joining international organizations without government authorization (see Section 2.b.). The government body known as the Libyan Arab Human Rights Committee was not known to have published any reports.

In February, AI visited the country for the first time in 15 years and later published its report "Time To Make Human Rights A Reality," which included recommendations pertaining to detention, the judiciary, and torture. Qadhafi later called for a number of human rights reforms such as the abolition of the People's Court and the abolition of torture. No reforms were implemented by year's end.

During the year, Qadhafi condemned the use of torture by governments and called on all countries to ratify international treaties that ban torture. He also called for continued cooperation with AI and other human rights organizations. However, in December, the Government refused to issue visas to a Human Rights Watch (HRW) delegation. The HRW observers were scheduled to begin a 3-week visit that would have been the organization's first visit to the country.

#### Section 5 Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law prohibits discrimination based on race, sex, religion, disability, or social status; however, the Government did not enforce effectively these prohibitions, particularly with regard to women and tribal minorities.

##### Women

The law prohibits domestic violence, but there was no reliable information on the penalties for punishment. There was little detailed information regarding the extent of violence against women; however, it reportedly remained a problem. Abuse within the family rarely was discussed publicly.

The law prohibits rape. The convicted rapist of a young girl must marry the girl, with her agreement, or serve a prison term of up to 25 years. There was no further information available on punishments for rape.

The law does not prohibit female genital mutilation (FGM). There were reports that FGM may have been performed on girls in remote areas of the country due to a large expatriate community of women from countries where FGM widely was practiced. The law prohibits prostitution; however, the authorities tolerated it.

The 1969 Constitutional Proclamation granted women total equality; however, traditional attitudes and practices continued to discriminate against women. Shari'a law governs inheritance, divorce, and the right to own property. A woman must have the permission of her husband or another close male relative to travel abroad.

The Department of Women's Affairs, under the GPC secretariat, collected data and oversaw the integration of women into all spheres of public life. The General Union of Women's Associations, established by the Government as a network of nongovernmental organizations, addressed women's employment needs. The opportunity for women to make notable social progress increased in recent years; however, lingering traditional restrictions, that discourage women from playing an active role in the workplace, often inhibited employment gains by women. Women comprised 22 percent of the labor force. There were four times as many working women as there were in 1970, according to a report by the National Center for Information and Verification. In general, the emancipation of women was a generational phenomenon. Educational differences between men and women have narrowed; however, a significant proportion of rural women did not attend school and were inclined to instill in their children such traditional beliefs as women's subservient role in society.

##### Children

The Government subsidized primary, secondary, and university education, and primary education was compulsory until age 15. Ninety-six percent of school-age children attended primary school, and most reached at least a 6th-grade level. Only 53 percent of girls and 71 percent of boys attended secondary school. The Government subsidized medical care, and it has improved the welfare of children; however, declining revenues and general economic mismanagement have led to cutbacks, particularly in medical services.

#### Trafficking in Persons

There was no information available regarding whether the law specifically prohibits trafficking in persons; however, the penal code prohibits prostitution and related offenses, including sexual trafficking.

There were reports of trafficking in persons. Several hundred Moroccan women reportedly were trafficked to the capital to work as prostitutes. The country was also a place of transit for women trafficked from Africa to Central Europe. In previous years, Sri Lankan women also were trafficked through the country. The extent of the Government's efforts to fight trafficking was not clear, but its joint and active collaborations with other affected countries indicated that the country is making significant efforts to fight human trafficking. In February, the Government extradited a major Eritrean human trafficker to Italy, after the Italian Government issued a warrant for her arrest. The Government repeatedly called for the lifting of the European Union (EU) arms embargo, stating that the embargo prevented it from obtaining equipment necessary to fight trafficking. The EU lifted the embargo on October 11.

#### Persons with Disabilities

No information was available on any government efforts to assist persons with disabilities.

#### National/Racial/Ethnic Minorities

Arabic-speaking Muslims of mixed Arab-Amazigh ancestry constituted 97 percent of the population. The principal minorities were Amazighs and sub-Saharan Africans. There were frequent allegations of discrimination based on tribal status, particularly against Amazighs in the interior and Tuaregs in the South.

#### Section 6 Worker Rights

##### a. The Right of Association

The law allows workers to form and join unions without previous authorization or excessive requirements, and the Government respected this right in practice. Members of each profession may form their own unions and syndicates to defend their professional rights. Workers may join the National Trade Unions' Federation, which is administered by the People's Committee system; however, the Government prohibited foreign workers from joining this organization. The National Trade Unions' Federation played an active role in the International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions, the Organization of African Trade Union Unity, and the World Federation of Trade Unions.

##### b. The Right to Organize and Bargain Collectively

The law does not provide for collective bargaining. The Government must approve all agreements made between unions and employers.

The law does not provide workers with the right to strike, and there were no reports of strikes during the year.

##### c. Prohibition of Forced or Compulsory Labor

There was no information regarding whether the law prohibits forced or compulsory labor, including by children, or whether such practices occurred.

There were credible reports that the Government arbitrarily forced some foreign workers into performing subversive activities against their own nationals.

##### d. Prohibition of Child Labor and Minimum Age for Employment

The minimum age for employment of children was 18 years. There was no information available on the prevalence of child labor, or whether forced or compulsory labor by children was prohibited or practiced (see Section 6.c.).

##### e. Acceptable Conditions of Work

The labor law defines the rights and duties of workers, including matters of compensation, pension rights, minimum rest periods, and working hours. The legal maximum workweek was 48 hours.

Wages, which are forbidden by the "Green Book" and actually are paid in the form of "entitlements," frequently were in arrears. A public sector wage freeze imposed more than a decade ago continued, particularly in the face of consistently high inflation. The average family lived on \$170 (86.9 dinars) a month. Although there was no information available regarding whether the average wage was sufficient to provide a worker and family with a decent standard of living, the Government heavily subsidized rent, utilities, oil, and food staples.

Labor inspectors were assigned to inspect places of work for compliance with occupational health and safety standards. Certain industries, such as the petroleum sector, attempted to maintain standards set by foreign companies. There was no information regarding whether workers may remove themselves from an unhealthy or unsafe work situation without risking employment.

Foreign workers constituted 1.6 million of the workforce; however, the labor law does not accord them equality of treatment. Foreign workers were permitted to reside in the country only for the duration of their work contracts, and they could not send more than half of their earnings to home countries. They were subjected to arbitrary pressures, such as changes in work rules and contracts, and had little option but to accept such changes or to depart the country.

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\*The U.S. Government re-established direct diplomatic relations with Libya in June 2004. Accordingly, some of the information contained in this report is based to a large extent on nongovernmental sources.